

Hi!

Let me just start by saying I've never been more excited about a mural! I've dreamt for years of being able to do a project like this and I am beyond thrilled that you guys have expressed such interest in this direction. There are very few murals out there that are painted with an open hand, and read more as a fine-art painting than a graphic and designer-y motif. I think this project is going to be something truly special and unusual.

The watershed around Roscoe and the Rockford area is simply magnificent. The sections of unchannelized switchbacks in the river, snaking their way across the landscape, is a lovely compositional element to play with. The contrast and interactions of the midwestern grid, the agricultural landscape, with the wildness of the river is not only aesthetically pleasing and dynamic, it defines the landscape, character, and history of this area – agriculture, and industry, sewn together by the Rock River. One of the reasons I really love this idea is that this mural speaks as much to place as almost anything could! The landscape would be rendered accurately, so curious viewers might be able to orient themselves and identify elements of the view. Some simple signage indicating the subject can help viewers of the mural connect with it and discuss it – something not everyone always feels comfortable doing, helping make the mural more accessible, and public art in general.

The wall is a perfect rectangle to make home for a grand painting. The mortar joints and tuck pointing on the brick is worn in a lot of areas, typical for a building of this age, and a painterly loose, open hand will work well on this surface vs. working for harder edges and smooth gradients. The impressionistic and gestural handling of the paint for a piece like this is a very good match for the surface, and will also help the mural age well over time as the busyness and “noise” of the image is visually resilient if the wall loses integrity in any areas.

I've used satellite imagery of Roscoe to generate the compositions. I'm not tied specifically to these two, I may tweak just a bit, but I wanted to provide two examples that show the range of how a painting like this could be developed. One is a little simpler and the other significantly more detailed and complex. Either would be great!

The first composition focuses a little closer to the ground, has the gentle twists of the river as the primary motif, and is a little more simplified. This level of rendering would be achievable at the lower end of your budget range, and I think would look great. The atmospheric qualities of the view as the landscape drops back is a defining motif, with the river as the primary subject. This would be closer to the \$20,000 mark of your budget.

The second composition pulls back the scope of vision a little more and allows for more nuance of color and value, a greater quantity of marks, and broader range and subtlety of color. It's a view that drops back dramatically, and creates atmospheric space in a striking way. Even more so than the first composition, the painting reads very realistically from a distance, and as viewers approach the wall closer up, it dissolves into a dense, loose, and abstract field of

energetic marks. Something like this would take about twice as long to execute for me, and would be at a \$30,000 to \$35,000 budget.

I've done a lot of paintings like this over the years, many of which are in private and public collections, including the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, and bringing this body of work off the gallery wall and out into the world is something I think could be really powerful and unique. Because of how I have generated these mockups, the colors are a little more naturalistic. I can tweak the colors to be more chromatic to really play up the full range of color in the landscape while still having the view read realistically. In these mockups the windows and door are white, but if it's ok, I'd paint them out so they are less obtrusive.

I look forward to hearing what excites you! I know that your budget is a bit of a moving target, and I hope these two proposals help give visuals to that conversation. I can thoughtfully scale the design and level of detail to your final budget. I think the more ambitious we can be with the painting the better, but I feel confident I can execute a compelling piece of art for your community wherever the numbers ultimately fall.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to dream on this, interest in working with me generally, and I can't wait to work with you all and get to know your community better. I am of course available to conference call or zoom to help clarify or expand upon anything, gather feedback, etc!

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Agran', with a stylized, flowing script.

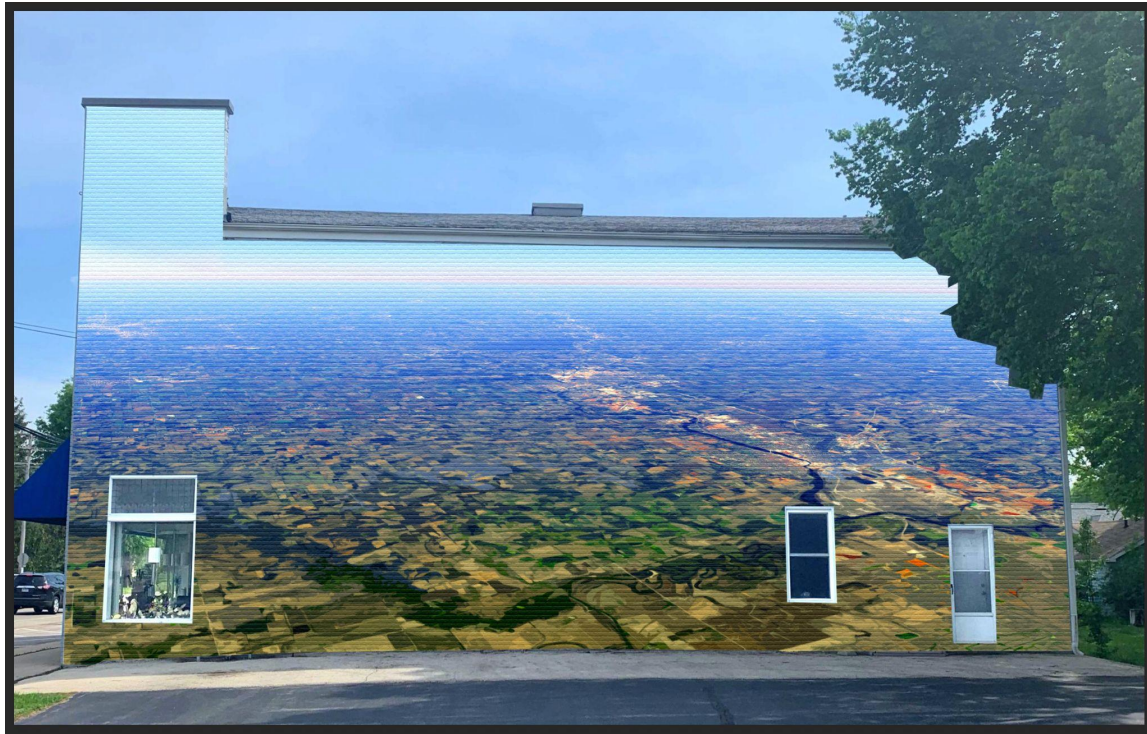
Thomas Agran

319.541.4554  
thomasagran@gmail.com

Design Proposal 1:



Design Proposal 2:



## Portfolio Inspiration

View of Iowa City, 6'x8'



View of Coralville, Iowa, for the Coralville Arena. Part of a suite of three murals, all 8'x16'



View of Guantanamo Bay Cuba for the historic Cedar Rapids Veterans Memorial Hall, 12'x20'



View of North Market Square Park, 6'x8'



South of Iowa City, Private Collection, 5'x7'



Near Great Bend, Kansas, in the collection of the Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, 6'x8'



## Supplementary info:

Materials: I always use the highest quality materials available for mural projects. If the wall surface is bare masonry, I prime either with tinted **Loxon Masonry Primer by Sherwin Williams**, or **Nova Color Gesso 200**, and use Nova's Gesso 200 for most other wall conditions. I typically use **Nova Color artist grade acrylic paint** for murals, manufactured in California for their quality pigments and strong paint film. I limit the pigments only to those with the **highest lightfastness ratings** to ensure the vibrancy of the mural has a long life. I top coat with sprayed applications of **Nova Color Satin Exterior Varnish 216** to protect the mural, strengthen the paint film, enrich the colors, and give the mural a consistent lustrous finish. I almost always paint everything on site, but in certain circumstances I use **PolyTab** (a technique pioneered in California and Philadelphia) to allow certain elements to be painted off-site and permanently laminated to the wall on-site using **Nova Color Matte Gel 208**. This indiscernible technique absorbs the texture of the wall, is proven to have a longer life than standard mural approaches, and can open up possibilities for mural projects that may otherwise be compromised by timeline, location, or weather, helping keep projects on budget and ensuring a strong visual and physical final image.

Equipment: I have many years experience working with lifts of all sizes and configurations (boom/scissor/vertical mast/etc), as well as scaffolding and ladder work. I carry a general liability policy to cover this kind of work.

## References:

Meridith McKinley, Via Partnership (St Louis / NYC)

Email: [mckinley@viapartnership.com](mailto:mckinley@viapartnership.com)

Phone: (314) 735 9268

Relationship: I worked with Meridith on a large scale commission in Okoboji for an 8'x110' mural for the Imagine Iowa Great Lakes organization. The project was completed 50% off site using Polytab and painted and installed on site over the course of three days in coordination with the McClure Engineering Company. I have continued to work for Meridith as a consultant on mural projects.

Nancy Bird, Executive Director of the Iowa City Downtown District

Email: [nancy@downtowniowacity.com](mailto:nancy@downtowniowacity.com)

Phone: (319) 354 0863

Relationship: I worked with Nancy and the ICDD staff on varied mural and public art commissions and management of community public art projects over the past few years before joining the staff in 2017 to create and manage the Iowa City Mural Project, other public art initiatives, and arts advocacy. I worked as the Director of Public Art for the ICDD for 3 years before stepping down to focus on my own work during the pandemic. I still work as a contractor for them managing mural projects and other public art endeavors.